



**Cumberland  
Council**

# **Cumberland Council Health and Safety Policy Statement 2024 - 2025**

## **Statement of Intent**

Cumberland Council places health and wellbeing at the heart of everything we do.

It is our policy to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of our employees and persons likely to be affected by our undertakings. Cumberland Council accepts its duties in relation to the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and all other relevant statutory obligations.

So far as is reasonably practicable Cumberland Council will:

- Provide safe premises, plant, equipment and systems of work that are safe and without risk to one's health or safety.
- Provide information, instruction, training and supervision designed to enable all employees to avoid hazards and contribute positively to a safety culture of health and safety at work, together with the necessary facilities and equipment to deal with accidents and emergencies.
- Ensure safe arrangements in connection with the use, handling, storage and transportation of articles and substances.
- Encourage and promote a culture between management and employees relating to all matters in relation to Health and Safety at work.
- Roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of all staff and at all levels within the Council are clearly defined and understood in order to secure corporate and individual compliance with relevant Health and Safety legislation.
- Create and maintain a working environment which has adequate facilities and suitable arrangements for the health, safety, and welfare of its employees, visitors, customers, volunteers and contractors including maintained schools on Cumberland Council premises.

## **Organisational Responsibilities**

### **Chief Executive Officer**

Holds the overall responsibility for the health and safety performance of Cumberland Council.

This includes overseeing the implementation of safety procedures and ensuring compliance with the law and associated regulations. The Chief Executive shall lead by example on the management of health and safety, ensuring the correct systems are in place and adequately resourced.

## Elected Members

Whilst the Chief Executive and Directors of the Council have overall accountability for health and safety, Elected Members play an important role in setting the strategic direction, scrutinising plans and influencing the overall culture for safety management within the authority. While not in day-to-day control, elected members need to satisfy themselves that risks are considered as part of their decision-making processes and are sensibly managed. Decisions made by elected members could impact on the health, safety and wellbeing of employees, volunteers, service users, contractors and members of the public.

## Executive Directors

Are responsible for maintaining high standards of health, safety, and welfare within their own Directorates. Each Directorate Management Team (working with recognised Trade Unions) will prepare an action plan for health and safety improvement. This will be regularly reviewed and if required expanded upon to describe the various functions and arrangements for health and safety to address specific risks within the Directorate. Directorate health and safety committees will be co-chaired with recognised Trade Unions.

## Line Managers and Supervisors

Have responsibility for employees within their teams or those accessing the services provided. They must provide suitable and sufficient risk assessments in relation to their operations, activities, and premises, and ensure that the control measures which they identify are communicated and implemented, together with maintaining a written record of these assessments ensuring they are periodically reviewed, particularly following incidents and significant changes.

Ensure regular engagement with their teams on health, safety, and welfare. Training and development plans must fully reflect the requirement for the provision of adequate training and instruction as necessary for health, safety and welfare, and these plans will be periodically reviewed to ensure their effectiveness.

## Individual Employee Responsibility

Health and Safety is everyone's responsibility. Failure to follow procedures or correct practice will be taken seriously. Where required, additional support, training or in extreme situations appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed.

## Corporate Health and Safety Team

The Corporate Health and Safety Team hold the relevant health and safety qualifications or experience and are appointed by the Council to act as the "competent person" as required under Regulation 7 of The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (MHSWR).

They are appointed to specific positions to provide competent advice, typically undertaking a point of contact role, but can also support colleagues and services at all levels throughout the organisation and in our maintained schools and settings.

Where relevant a Health and Safety point of contact will be allocated to a Directorate to act as its primary source of health and safety expertise. They will act to support the Director and Assistant Directors/Heads of Department. Up-to-date contact details for the Corporate Health and Safety Team will be provided on the intranet and the Schools' Portal.

## Arrangements

Cumberland Council will ensure that suitable arrangements in relation to health, safety and wellbeing are in place, ensuring they play a central part of the day-to-day management and enable everyone to contribute to improving the health, safety and wellbeing culture across Cumberland Council.

## Identifying Hazards and Controlling Risk

Cumberland Council will provide safe systems of work, premises, working environments, equipment and substances to comply with legislation and meet best practice. Corporate Health and Safety procedures will establish the key elements of our health and safety management system arrangements in more detail.

## Corporate Health and Safety Group

Cumberland Council will ensure it establishes robust health and safety governance and performance management arrangements. This group (co-chaired between Exec, H&S Lead and recognised Trade Union representatives) will lead on corporate health, safety and wellbeing issues and engage with staff, members, and contractors at all levels. Corporate health and safety procedures will be reviewed, and suggestions will be put forward to be approved by the Corporate Health and Safety team following this consultation. This group will convene on a quarterly basis.

## Trade Unions

Trade Unions have a vital role to play in the development of our health, safety and wellbeing policies and procedures and the promotion of a positive health safety and wellbeing culture. Representatives will be invited to attend health and safety groups and discussion forums at all operational levels.

## Performance Management and Continuous Learning

Cumberland Council will ensure adequate health and safety standards are achieved, and continual improvement sought. Governance and performance management systems are in place to monitor progress against the Corporate Health and Safety Action Plan, together with audit findings and monitoring of accident and work-related ill health data.

Wherever possible, health and safety performance and ways of working will be benchmarked against available data, other Local Authorities, and wider industry best practice to seek and achieve continual performance improvements and ongoing learning.

## Corporate Health and Safety Team

The Corporate Health and Safety Team will produce quarterly dashboard reports summarising key health and safety metrics for reporting to Directorate Management Teams, the Corporate Management Team and the Corporate Health and Safety Group. Overall health and safety performance will then be reported annually to the Council's Cabinet by way of the Annual Health, Safety and Wellbeing Report. Interim updates will be provided on a quarterly basis (or by exception as required) to the Member who has portfolio responsibilities that include Corporate Health and Safety.

## Resources

Cumberland Council will provide the resources necessary to ensure we provide suitable levels of support for our health and safety management system, thereby enabling our Health and Safety team to provide the correct level of competence, awareness, communications, and competent professional advice throughout.

These include:

- Provision of professionally qualified staff to provide "competent advice" on occupational health and safety management support to all Council staff including maintained schools and elected members.
- Effective training programmes, communication, and awareness campaigns.
- Internal and external communications relevant to OH&S management system arrangements.
- Best practice health and safety standards expected and monitored for commissioned services and contractors that deliver services on behalf of the Council.
- Sourcing suitable technology for auditing and inspecting, appropriate for a modern and progressive organisation, capable of auditing risk management systems. Monitoring health and safety arrangements and considering our organisational responsibilities with physical and technical measures, data management and retention in line with GDPR.
- Communications and awareness events will be progressed throughout the year to maintain and further raise the profile of effective health and safety.
- Suitable documented information made freely available to all interested parties and can be made available in alternative formats upon request.

## Review

This policy statement will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure it remains fit for purpose and up-to-date. This policy has been endorsed by the Corporate Health and Safety Group and will be implemented by Council Officers and overseen by the Chief Executive as head of paid service and the senior management team made up of departmental directors. We will ensure that the Chief Executive, Council Leader and our Portfolio Holder for Health, Safety and Wellbeing will provide overall leadership on health and safety for the Council and will review and sign off the health and safety policy statement. This policy statement will be communicated to all employees and interested parties and be published on the Council's website.



**Cllr Mark Fryer**  
Leader of the Council



**Andrew Seekings**  
Chief Executive  
Cumberland Council



**Cllr Chris Southward**  
Portfolio holder for Digital  
Connectivity and Customer Focus